

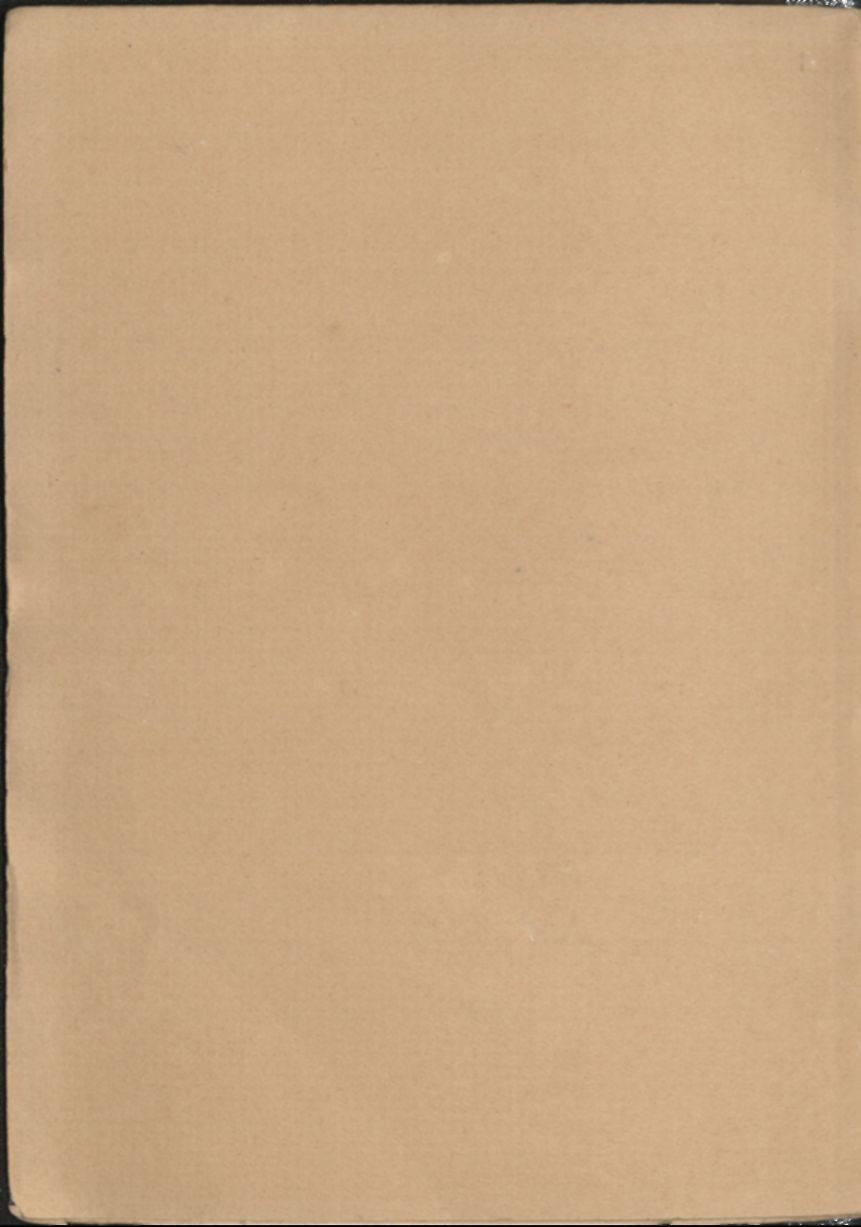
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*A Famous
Industry*

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A Famous Industry



Decorative Fabrics of Distinction

STROHEIM & ROMANN

730 FIFTH AVENUE at 57th STREET
NEW YORK

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IN THE years that followed, the industry at Jouy was at different times both re-organized and revolutionized. Spacious new buildings were built; partnerships were formed and dissolved; and mechanical devices did away with much of the laborious hand labor. Perhaps the introduction of copper plate and later of cylinder printing added more than any one thing to the material prosperity of the industry, but always it was the energy, the technical skill and the business acumen of its founder which were responsible for its continued prestige. "Providence gave me the knowledge, and caused it to bear fruit," was his simple explanation of his remarkable accomplishments.

BERKAMPF persistently refused to cheapen his product by resorting to the use of inferior dyes or cotton stuffs and the inscription "*bon teint*" which was stamped upon the *toiles de Jouy* was indeed no fable. The various processes of manufacture were also watched over with the greatest care. The material itself, which came either from India, from Switzerland or from approved sources nearer the factory, was first soaked, then placed on a raft or float and beaten with flails.

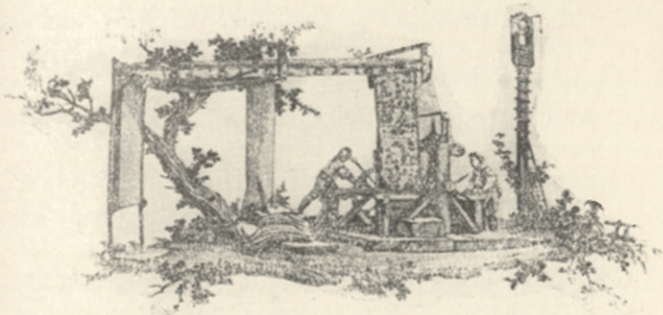


A printed cotton, of about the year 1780, from the Jony manufactory. It shows a decided Indian pattern.

Next it was mangled or smoothed for the wood block printing, after which it was dried, soaked in running water for the removal of mordant salts, milled, wrung out and given a fixing bath. Certainly not the least picturesque part of the whole process was the bleaching and drying of the cottons on the outside walls of the great drying-room and in the meadows surrounding the factory. No wonder the passing coaches were halted that their occupants might enjoy the colorful scene, exclaim over the equipment of the factory and place their orders for the popular *indiennes*! But the bleaching in the meadows was not the last of the necessary processes of manufacture. A final bath was used to clear and heighten the colors and the *toiles* were then stiffened with starch and beeswax, pressed through a *lissoir* and prepared for shipping.

THESE various phases in the manufacture of the famous printed cottons of Jouy are delightfully represented in Huet's well-known design, "*Les Travaux de la Manufacture*." It was the first of the charming patterns which this gifted artist prepared for Oberkampf over a long period of years. Huet was responsible for most of the larger furnishing

patterns which issued from the Jouy manufactory. In these he ordinarily followed one of two different schemes of arrangement, either scattering detached scenes over a plain ground and filling in the intervening spaces with smaller motifs, or framing his figures in foliated scrolls. Among the most charming of the designs which Huet executed for the Jouy plant were the gay pastorals and rustic scenes typical of the Louis XVI period. He also produced several patterns which were significant of political events, while in later years his versatile talent readily adapted itself to the geometric patternings and classic designs of the Directoire and Empire.



THESE large furnishing *toiles*, which served so admirably to advertise the Jouy manufactory, were not the earliest of its productions. At the beginning there had been only monotone prints with small figures crudely engraved on a dotted *picotage* ground in a field of arabesques. A little later small patterns of flowers, picots, checks and squares made their appearance. About the year 1772 polychrome prints with scattered bouquets of natural flowers and Indian and Persian motifs became popular. Cottons printed with these smaller designs were the chief source of revenue for the factory since they could be produced at a comparatively low cost and in large quantities.

THE upper classes were as ardent in their appreciation of the Jouy prints as were those of more moderate means. Oberkampf had shown a very keen insight into the factors which control business success when he located his factory near Versailles, in a spot accessible to those who frequented court circles. Many stories have been told of the royal visitors who came to Jouy to see its famous factory and to interview the energetic little man who supervised every phase of the

industry. As a young dauphine, Marie Antoinette delighted in walking through the gardens that she might hear Oberkampf and the workmen speaking her native tongue. Her brothers-in-law, the Count d'Artois and the Count de Provence, are said also to have visited the factory and even to have experimented at printing. Napoleon more than once made the trip to Jouy to inspect the factory and to interview its owner, and it remained for him to pin the cross of the Legion of Honor upon the breast of the aged Oberkampf. The Jouy plant had become a royal manufactory and its founder had received letters of nobility some years previously.

BUT such distinctions were unable to ward off the inevitable series of disasters which overtook the manufactory following the invasions of the enemy in the later days of the Empire. Broken down by reverses and ill health, Oberkampf died in 1815. The industry for which he had been responsible survived him by only a few years. Not long afterwards Balzac was led to write, in his *Cousin Pons*, the following passage: "How had the curtains at the windows lasted so long, for they were of yellow calico printed

with red rose designs, manufactured at Jouy? Oberkampf had been complimented by the Emperor in 1809 for these atrocious products of the cotton industry."

THE vagaries of fashion are proverbial. What one age discards, another enthusiastically endorses, but it is safe to say that the present-day appreciation of printed *toiles* is indeed a lasting one.



A small sprigged pattern. About 1775.



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